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ABSTRACT

The history of intercultural communication as a field of study in the United States is outlined. The origins of intercultural communication in cultural anthropology are explored. A relationship is pointed out among the fields of intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, interracial communication, interethnic communication, and international communication. The development of the field in the U.S. until 1980 is described in terms of the definitions of culture, communication, and intercultural communication used in the literature and in terms of publications, professional organizations, conferences, educational offerings, and research in this field. The boundaries of intercultural communication were identified in the late 1970s and the discipline became established soon after. A 60-item reference list is appended. (MSE)

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A Brief History of the Study of Intercultural
Communication in the United States

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Running head: HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL
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Abstract

The field of intercultural communication (IC) in the United States is relatively new. Its boundaries were identified in the late 1970s.

The origin of IC is cultural anthropology, and culture is a very important feature of IC. IC is mainly interpersonal interaction between people with different cultural backgrounds, but it includes cross-cultural communication, inter-racial communication, inter-ethnic communication and international communication.

In this paper, I will describe how the study of IC has developed in the United States up to around 1980 briefly in terms of definitions of culture, communication, and IC, publications, professional organizations and conferences, education, and research. I will also discuss some of the characteristics of each area.

Through this study, reviewing various literatures on IC concerning the above areas, I have concluded that the field of IC became established in about 1980.

A Brief History of the Study of Intercultural Communication in the United States

Introduction

The importance of intercultural communication (IC) had increased greatly in Japan since 1970, because more and more Japanese have gone abroad every year. As more Japanese people work and travel overseas, the direct encounters of individual Japanese with people of other nationalities increased, and communication problems increased greatly.

Since the Japanese economy relies on foreign trade and business to a great extent, intercultural problems are very serious for the Japanese. Therefore, IC has become very important, and many people are concerned about it, even though it is not taught in many schools.

There are many publications on IC in Japan. Many of them seem to have been influenced by the study of IC and cultural anthropology in the United States. Edward T. Hall's The Silent Language was translated in 1966 and read by many Japanese. John C. Condon also contributed to the study of IC in Japan.

However, there are not many publications to introduce the history and the state of the study of IC in Japan or even in the United States. The goal of this paper is to describe how the study of IC has developed in the United States in terms of definitions, publications, professional organizations and conference, education, and research, and then discuss some of the characteristics of each area. Because of lack of recent

literature, I will discuss the development up to around 1980.

Culture

The origins of intercultural communication (IC) can be traced to cultural anthropology. Communication specialists then became interested in the subject of communication among members of different cultures.

We can go back to Boas' (1940) collection of articles, Race, Language and Culture and Hall's series of books (1959, 1963). Boas' book provided good anthropological description of American Indian languages, but it did not handle problems of IC. Hall compared cultures and pointed out inadequacies of Western culture (Asante, Newmark, & Blake, 1979).

Another important contribution of anthropology to IC is that language was recognized as an important part of culture. Kluckhohn (1949) maintained that every language is also a special way of looking at the world and interpreting experience. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956) maintained that language functions not simply as a device for reporting experience, but also, and more significantly, as a way of defining experience for its speakers.

In anthropology, culture was an omnibus term designating both the distinctly human forms of adaptation and the distinctive ways in which the different human populations organize their lives on earth (Levine, 1973). Anthropology did not present clear theoretical arguments for IC. IC remained a field of inquiry without tradition of social or behavioral science.

It is encouraging to recognize that cultural anthropologists such as Dell Hymes, Ethel Albert, Clifford Geertz, Roy Wagner, and Edward T. Hall have long considered the study of communication as an essential ingredient of the study of culture (Prosser, 1978).

Since late 1960s, culture has been considered together with communication. Culture is based on the community of communication (Deutsch, 1966). In this view, culture consists of socially stereotyped patterns of behavior, including habits of language and thought which are transmitted through various forms of social learning, particularly through methods of early child-rearing standardized in that culture.

IC specialists have begun to take more seriously the works of cultural anthropologists in relation to their own study of the relationships between communication and culture (Prosser, 1978).

Alfred Smith (1966a) regarded culture as a code which we learn and share. Learning and sharing require communication, and communication requires coding and symbols, which must be learned and shared. This idea reflects communication and culture inseparable.

In the 1970s, communication specialists started defining culture. Sitaram (1970) defined culture as the sum total of the learned behaviors of a group of people that are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and that are transmitted from generation to generation. Porter (1972) defined culture in one of the earliest textbooks of IC as the cumulative

deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions, concepts of self, the universe and self-universe relationships, hierarchies of status, role expectations, spatial relations, and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.

Culture was considered one of the cores in IC. Until IC courses were offered by many universities, cultural anthropology served an important role in the training specialists of IC (Prosser, 1978).

Kim (1984) argued that culture has three dimensions in operationalization--the level of cultural group membership of communicators, the social context in which IC takes place, and the channel through which IC messages are transmitted. These are clear targets for research.

Another important aspect of IC concerning culture is that there were two schools of thought: one was cultural dialogue and the other, cultural criticism. The former was seeking internationalism and humanism to promote world understanding. The latter sought to find the points of conflict in each culture in order to isolate them as researchable issues in transcultural interaction (Asante, Newmark, & Blake, 1979).

Communication

The definitions of communication are more diverse and varied in nature and scope than those of culture. Stevens (1950) defined culture as the discriminatory response of an organism to

a stimulus. This means that communication occurs when stimulus (environmental disturbance) works on organism and the organism responds.

Cherry (1957) defined communication not as the response itself but as essentially the relationship set up by the transmission of stimuli and the evocation of responses. Gerbner (1958) defined communication as social interaction through messages which could be formally coded, symbolic or representational events of some shared aspect of a culture. Berelson and Steiner (1964) emphasized the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc. by the use of symbols. Parry (1967) contended that it was appropriate to regard the communicative act as a special instance of the interplay of an organism in relation with its environment, the basic link between man and his external world, as the prototype of communication.

Communication involves people and their environment. Thus culture (environment) is an important factor in communication. Particularly when people have different cultural backgrounds, culture has a very important influence on communication.

Intercultural Communication

There are many definitions of intercultural communication (IC). One is interaction between members of differing cultures (Sitaram & Cogdell, 1976). Another definition is the art of understanding and being understood by the audience of another culture (Sitaram, 1970). These definitions include at least two cultures and interaction between the cultures.

Samovar and Porter (1972) stated that IC occurs whenever the parties to a communication act bring with them different experiential backgrounds that reflect a long-standing deposit of group experience, knowledge, and values. They included both culture and communication in their definitions. Rich (1974) states that communication is intercultural when it occurs between peoples of different cultures. Stewart (1974) had a similar definition--that communication which occurs under conditions of cultural difference--language, values, customs, and habits.

A common feature of all these definitions is the mention of the concepts culture and communication, neither of which have widely agreed-upon definitions (Saral, 1977). Some of the definitions are in fact tautological in that they use the terms "culture" and/or "communication" in the definition.

Badami (1976) pointed out the importance of a variable of participants or of setting--that is, a context for communication rather than as a separate phase or level of communication.

In many cases, IC and cross-cultural communication are understood as being the same. However, Gudykunst and Kim (1984) differentiated between them in their preface, maintaining that the former was a comparison of some phenomena across cultures and the latter was interaction between people from different cultures. The study of IC is generally considered to include cross-cultural communication.

IC includes inter-racial communication (communication between different races), inter-ethnic communication

(communication between different ethnic groups), cross-cultural communication, (comparison of two different communication styles) and international communication.

International communication is distinctly different from IC (Sitaram, 1970) in that it is interaction between political structures or nations, often carried on by representatives of those nations. (Sitaram, 1970). It is group communication between nations, while IC is interpersonal communication between two people who have different cultural backgrounds.

Thus, IC is not necessarily communication among people of different nations. In heterogeneous countries such as the United States, it can include communication among people who share the same nationality but have different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Prosser (1978) stressed six critical issues central to the study of communication among members of different cultures. These include 1) the importance of similarities and differences, 2) the nature of conflict in human communication and culture, 3) the control of communication and culture, 4) the impact of technology on communication and culture, 5) the importance of cultural stability versus change, and 6) the question of cultural imperialism versus dependency.

Publications on Intercultural Communication

Since the study of intercultural communication (IC) is relatively young, there were almost no publications on the subject until 1970. Because of strong influence of cultural anthropology, two types of books are mentioned the origins of IC:

Boas' (1940) Race, Language and Culture and Hall's series of books (1959, 1963). Boas provided good anthropological descriptions of Indian languages but did not deal with real problems of IC. Hall gave us a general guide to human culture but no clear theoretical arguments about IC (Asante, Newmark & Blake, 1979).

The literature on IC has been growing steadily since the early 1960s (Asante, Newmark & Blake, 1979). However, no full-length texts on the theoretical aspects of IC existed until the early 1970s (Prosser, 1978).

Barna and Jain (1978) link the origin of IC instruction to the publication of Hall's (1959) The Silent Language, Oliver's (1962) Culture and Communication, and Smith's (1966b) Communication and Culture. The last two books intended to connect culture and communication. Oliver's work is a look at national character and other deeply embedded cultural differences which serve as barriers to harmonious international relations. It includes suggestions for approaches appropriate to rhetoric in diplomacy and international relations.

In the 1970s, many textbooks were published: Samovar & Porter (1972) Intercultural Communication: A Reader, its second edition (1976), Prosser (1973) Intercommunication among Nations and Peoples, Harms (1973) Intercultural Communication, Condon & Yousef (1975) An Introduction to Intercultural Communication, Ruhly (1976) Orientations to Intercultural Communication, Sitaram & Cogdell (1976) Foundations of Intercultural Communication, Dodd

(1977) Perspectives on Cross-cultural Communication, Fischer & Merrill (1977) International and Intercultural Communication, Prosser (1978b) Cultural Dialogue, Weaver (1978) Crossing Cultural Barriers, Sarbaugh (1979) Intercultural Communication, and more have followed.

All of these books represent the attempt to utilize theories of psychology, rhetoric, and anthropology to explain the phenomenon of interacting with humans from different ethnic or cultural groups (Asante, Newmark & Blake, 1979). As mentioned above, IC does not mean communication only with people from other countries but also communication between people who have different cultural backgrounds but who are citizens of the same country.

There are several textbooks on interracial and interethnic communication, including Smith (1973) Transactional Communication, Rich (1974) Interracial Communication, and Blubaugh & Pennington (1976) Crossing Differences: Interracial Communication. Their treatment of daily social interactions in the United States is very important.

As IC has been studied more, various bibliographies have been published. The most up-to-date was Seelye & Tyler (1977) Intercultural Communication Resources (Prosser, 1978). This bibliography covers materials on IC and related fields thoroughly and, in addition, has some annotations.

Hoopes (1971, 1972, 1973, 1974), in a set of volumes, Readings in Intercultural Communication, reported on developing

constructs of IC as well as describing ongoing research in this field.

Many conferences, including international ones, seminars, and workshops on IC have been held. Divisions of organizations for the field of IC were formed in 1970s. Many of them have produced valuable publications, which I will discuss in the following section.

Conferences and Organizations

The first international conference of the speech-communication arts and sciences was held in Heidelberg, Germany in August, 1968 by the German Speech Association, the Pacific Speech Association and the Speech Association of America. The second international conference of the speech-communication arts and sciences was held in Tokyo, Japan in June, 1969, by the Pacific Speech Association and Japan Speech Society. The third one was held in Tokyo the following June by the above two organizations and the Speech Association of America. An agreement to found a new organization was made.

The following January, the Communication Association of the Pacific was organized between Japan and the United States (Kawashima & Hirai, 1986). Much information was exchanged and many IC studies were conducted. The results of some of the studies were published in their journals, Speech Education and Communication.

In July, 1972, the first IC conference was held in Tokyo, by the Communication Department of International Christian

University at the request of the Commission for International and Intercultural Communication of the Speech Communication Association. More than 2,000 people attended from the fields of politics, anthropology, linguistics, film making, business, sociology, physics, journalism, psychology, and communication. Some of the papers presented in this conference were published later (Condon & Saito, 1974).

Many other IC conferences have been held, and they have produced more valuable publications, including Prosser (1974, 1975) Syllabi in Intercultural Communication, Jain, Prosser, and Miller (1974) Intercultural Communication: Proceedings of Speech Communication Association Summer Conference, X, Jain and Cummings (1975) Proceedings of Conference on Intercultural Communication and Teacher Education.

In 1974, the first professional organization on IC, The International Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) held its first conference in Gaithersburg, Maryland. It started its professional quarterly journal The International Journal of Intercultural Relations in 1977. This journal has continued to publish research and conceptual papers, as well as reviews of publication on IC since then.

In 1977 and 1978, three books were published by SIETAR: Overview of Intercultural Education, Training and Research: Vol. 1. Theory, Vol. 2. Education and Training, and Vol. 3. Special Research Areas. These three volumes served to clarify the field to some extent.

Two major professional organizations for communication scholars, the Speech Communication Association (SCA) and the International Communication Association (ICA), organized divisions on intercultural communication in in early 1970s. The Speech Communication Association started its Commission on International and Intercultural Communication, under its first chairperson, Michael H. Prosser. The SCA had designated 1970 as the Intercultural-International Speech Communication Year and set this subject as the theme of its 1970 annual convention in New Orleans (Barna & Jain, 1978). The commission published its own annual, International and Intercultural Communication Annual in 1974, and has continued to publish papers by the leading people in this field (Casmir, 1974, 1975, 1976; Jain, 1977, 1979; Gudykunst, 1983; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Gudykunst, Stewart, & Ting-Toomey, 1985). Since 1983, the annual, published by Sage, has become more like a book in form, concentrating on a certain topic each year.

In 1970, the International Communication Association (ICA) recognized the area and created a Division of Intercultural Communication, the first chairman of which was K. S. Sitaram (Weaver, 1977). Each year at the ICA national convention, the division holds panels, the major papers of which are published in Communication Yearbook.

Education

Intercultural communication (IC) education has developed greatly since late 1960s (Saral, 1977). During the 1960s not one

university had courses in IC. Today, almost every major university in the country teaches a course in some aspect of IC (Asante, et al, 1979).

The teaching of IC as a university subject began around 1960 and was encouraged by the publication of such works as The Silent Language by Edward T. Hall (1959), Culture and Communication by Robert T. Oliver (1962), and Communication and Culture by Alfred G. Smith (1966b) (Barna & Jain, 1978).

The number of IC courses and programs grew rapidly after 1970. Michael Flack (University of Pittsburgh) offered the first formal course in a university. William Howell (University of Minnesota) spotlighted the area of IC and provided course models and encouragement to others. (Barna & Jain, 1978)

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) supported the concept by establishing a national U.S.-Foreign Student Relations Committee headed by Clifford Clarke and by disseminating information about the workshops to schools of higher education throughout the United States. The diversity of courses taught within the area of IC is reflected clearly in the Syllabi in Intercultural Communication: 1974 compiled by Prosser (Beebe & Biggers, 1986).

By the late 1970s, about 200 colleges and universities offered one or more courses in IC, and about 60 colleges and universities offered graduate courses. Students taking intercultural communication courses belonged to many diverse disciplines including communication, speech, journalism, social

work, education, nursing, and business administration.

There has been a growing trend toward incorporating IC units in introductory communication courses and in courses taught in areas such as multicultural education, international relations, and social work (Barna & Jain, 1978).

Howell compiled 119 faculty members in universities in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in his Directory of International Communication Scholars in MUCIA Universities in 1971. He found that there should be more systematic arrangement in this field. He proposed a model that suggested guidelines for the development of IC study in higher education institutions. In this model, he emphasized that the director of IC studies should be designated, since this field includes so many disciplines. He proposes that departments offer majors and minors in this field, including courses from other departments, and offer existing graduate degrees with emphasis on IC rather than starting new degrees (Howell, 1975).

Fundamental assumptions underlying the teaching of IC in 1970s were:

- 1) Communication is considered to be a dynamic process whereby human behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, is perceived and responded to.
- 2) Cultural pluralism is a desirable goal for human civilization.
- 3) Culture affects and is affected by communication.
- 4) Individual differences occur within cultures and such individual differences also affect the occurrence, nature and effectiveness.
- 5) The process of communication under conditions of cultural differences can be analyzed and the knowledge about the process of IC and related skills can be taught.

- 6) IC courses should be involved in the creation and perfection of general IC competences that would encourage movement to and aid interaction in any number of cultural groups.
- 7) Cognitive input of rigorous nature, including theory and research, should be encouraged along with skill development in IC courses.
- 8) IC courses are interdisciplinary in nature and therefore should draw materials from many disciplines (Barna & Jain 1978).

Fundamental ideas included:

- 1) The values, beliefs, assumptions, and other aspects of one's own culture must be brought to awareness before effective interaction with persons from other cultures is possible.
- 2) Information of a culture-specific nature is useful for purposes of contrast to bring one's own cultural background to awareness, to understand concepts of IC, and as a base of knowledge for persons expecting to interact with members of that cultural group.
- 3) Cultural similarities and cultural differences affect various aspects of the communication process including perception, meaning, attitude formation and change, thinking, and behavioral response.
- 4) IC courses include the following major topics, concepts and theories:
 - a. Formulation of in-groups and out-groups and the resulting ethnocentrism.
 - b. Cultural similarities and differences and their effects on communication.
 - c. Subjective culture theory.
 - d. Stereotypes and communication.
 - e. Racism, prejudice, discrimination, and IC.
 - f. Tolerance for ambiguity, acceptance of diversity, and empathy.
 - g. Language and culture, bilingualism and problems of translation.
 - h. Nonverbal factors in IC.
 - i. Cultural adjustment, culture shock, cultural adaptation, and acculturation.
 - j. Analysis of IC in terms of role theory, value theory, attribution theory, motivation theory, attraction theory, perception theory, attitude change theory, social exchange theory, personality theory, and communication theory. (Barna & Jain, 1978).

IC courses tend to use one or more of the following four approaches:

- 1) Social Interaction Approach: study of the effects of cultural traits, cultural similarities, and cultural differences on social perception and other communication processes.
- 2) Cultural Group Approach: study of communication behaviors and cultural patterns of a specific racial, ethnic, or national cultural group with a comparative analysis of communication patterns of various cultural groups.
- 3) Social Problems Approach: focus on the communication aspects of various intercultural problems such as racism, prejudice, discrimination, assimilation, acculturation, re-entry, international conflicts, and socio-cultural change.
- 4) Communication Theory Approach: focus on how various concepts of communication theory manifest themselves in intercultural settings (Barna & Jain, 1978).

Ph.D. courses should be offered to produce more qualified instructors of IC (Barna & Jain, 1978).

The courses of IC have become increasingly popular in colleges and universities. Many new textbooks have been published. The programs and journals in the field of communication reflect the concerns related to teaching the IC course (Broome, 1986).

Broome points out that one of the most common distinctions made regarding teaching and training in IC is between a "culture-general" and a "culture-specific" approach to the subjects. The former treats a group of cultures together, analyzing them with criteria created by the analyst and providing an external "alien" view of the various systems. The latter, on the other hand, is applied to one cultural group at a time, analyzing it from the view of one familiar with the system and who knows how to function within it, thus providing an internal view of the system

using criteria chosen from within the culture.

Though culture-specific approach is good for training people to prepare living or business in certain cultures, the culture-general approach is more often used in colleges and universities, judging from an examination of course syllabi from colleges and universities across the United States (Hoopes, 1977). The philosophy behind this is that people with culture-general knowledge can overcome any problems in a specific culture (Ruhly, 1976). Broome (1986) points out that each approach is lacking in three areas: 1) the failure to provide an understanding of culture as a system, 2) inappropriate comparisons between the students' own culture and others, and 3) the failure to place behaviors studied in proper context. He suggest that both approaches should be used in IC courses.

Research

The 1970s was a period in which the discipline of intercultural communication (IC) searched for its identity. There were interests and needs to meet practical intercultural problems, and scholars worked hard to make their research accepted by other areas of communication (Kim, 1984).

Since definitions of IC have many ambiguities, as discussed previously, IC research deals with many variables in many ways. Because of this, many studies in intercultural communication lacked specific focus or direction (Saral, 1977).

Most studies of IC described, discussed and/or cited in literature referred to research carried out by scholars of

various other disciplines, including anthropology, linguistics, psychology, sociology. These scholars were interested in the study of culture, and its effect on human behavior, examined typically from the perspective of the particular discipline involved (Saral, 1977)

There were no clear boundaries around of the study of IC. Ellingsworth (1976) raised serious questions as to whether IC ought to be spoken of as a field, and whether there is any point in seeking or claiming any uniqueness for IC research.

Becker (1969) distinguished studies between "research on the communication process within various cultures (the sort of work many linguists, cultural anthropologists, and diffusion scholars are doing) and research on communication process across various cultures." Many IC scholars followed this idea. Samovar and Porter (1972) emphasized that IC research must focus on intercultural rather than cross-cultural situations where interpersonal relations occur between members of different cultures.

Much of the research in IC has dealt the process within cultures. This is because the processes of intracultural communication is necessary to developing, testing, and refining exploratory studies about various IC processes. Using this process, very little progress to isolate variables which affect IC.

By the end of 1970s, research focus was primarily upon framing the appropriate questions that reflect the complexity of

phenomena under investigation. Many research projects were being carried out in the field. However, most of the research design, data-collection, and data-analysis methodologies were still unidirectional and were not appropriate for such dynamic and multidimensional interaction (Saral, 1979). Malpass (1977) argued that the basis for the methodological difficulties in intercultural research were actually theoretical and not methodological. Another limitation of IC research was that people who engaged in such research had been trained in the Western research paradigms.

Howell (1979) argued that much more observation is needed before building theories, and theories need more observation. IC was still new field and offered a great many opportunities for research.

Summary and Conclusions

The field of intercultural communication (IC) is relatively new, and its boundaries were not clearly identified until the late 1970s (Saral, 1977; Prosser, 1978). Conceptualizations of IC range from those which regard IC as a subsystem of human communication to those that consider it as an independent and respectable area of study that cuts across various disciplines, including communication (Saral, 1977).

We can trace the origin of IC to cultural anthropology. Culture is an important component of IC. There are many definitions of culture and communication and many understandings of them.

IC is mainly interpersonal interaction between people with different cultural backgrounds, but it includes cross-cultural communication, inter-racial communication, inter-ethnic communication and international communication.

Publications in IC increased in the 1960s, but most of full-length texts have come out since 1970. Many textbooks were published, including inter-racial and interethnic communication since 1972. Other publications, such as research papers, explanations of theories, bibliographies, and collected conference papers, were also published.

Professional communication organizations founded IC divisions early 1970s. One of them, SCA's Commission on Intentional and Intercultural Communication started International and Intercultural Communication Annual in 1974. The Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research was founded in 1974, and it started publishing International Journal of Intercultural Relations in 1977. These two publications in particular enhanced the number and quality of papers in this field.

Almost no schools offered IC courses in 1960s, but by the late 1970s, more than 200 colleges and universities were offering them. However, the content of courses varied a great deal from one school to another. Graduate programs were suggested. Most of programs have tended either to be culture-general or culture-specific. A proposal was made to organize studies and areas of research concerned with IC together.

Since definitions of IC were not clear, there was not much focus in the research in IC, even though a great many studies have been done since 1970. Early research was in the fields of anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and psychology.

IC was emphasized more than cross-cultural communication.

Researchers studied the process of communication in one culture and used that approach to find variables for intercultural communication.

By the end of the 1970s, the field of IC has gradually become stronger and more focused through the increase of publications and research, organizational support, and expansion of education. It had established itself as a well-defined discipline, though there were still large gaps in theory and research, and the field is mainly influenced by Western thought and research models. We can probably conclude that the field of IC was established in about 1980.

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